

## heather by frenchbunniezz

**Category:** Stranger Things - Fandom

**Genre:** /hj, /lh, Angst, Byeler - Freeform, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Songfic, based off of heather by conan gray, byler, conan gray - Freeform, every conan gray song is about byler, hurt to comfort but without the comfort, i aint ever seen two pretty best friends, i was gonna make this happy but i wrote it to avoid school work, if you disagree you're wrong, obviously, one of ems always gotta have internalized homophobia, repressed gay thoughts, then school ended so i was like ok ig it has to be angst

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

It was just a shirt, right? Why did Will care so much?

(byler oneshot thing based off of heather by conan gray)

## heather

heather

December was always a bad month for Will Byers.

The anniversary of his experiences with the upside-down never failed to rip open old wounds, leaving him feeling hollowed out and exhausted just from being alone with his thoughts.

The months following October through December always felt like a doctor was sewing him up again. Stitching together that part of him that unleashed the nightmares and bad thoughts. By the time summer ended, all the wounds almost felt faded.

But of course, the second week of October always ripped them open without fail.

It used to be Will's favorite part of the year. trick-or-treating, Thanksgiving dinner, preparing for Christmas. A constant rollercoaster of joy in the last few months of the year. But now those months consisted of him waking up in a sweat, tears tracking down his face, and panic seizing his heart like a snake.

Tying his shoe and looking up to see that everything was rotting. The violent red swirls of the sky combined with the freezing blue world that visited him in his nightmares rarely in regular months but started to haunt him in real life during the last couple of months.

On December third, Will had started to finally relax. He could imagine the doctor making his way back, repairing the hole in his chest once again. His friends were all talking about Christmas plans, and he couldn't help but share their joy.

It was that morning that Mike gave him his sweater.

He had ridden his bike to school that morning, both his mom and Jonathan already at work for the day. Will only put on a loose flannel and holey jeans, but he found that he enjoyed the slight nip of cold against him as he made his way to school.

After getting off of the bike, and walking through the school's front doors, he realized that the peaceful chilly breeze had only been enjoyable when he was physically moving, and sitting still in his chair with a thin flannel was not fun.

His second class wasn't as bad, the gym was inside for that day, and Will threw dodgeballs to try and warm up. But the third period was in the adjacent building, meaning he'd have to walk through the cold to get there.

Both Mike and Max were in his next class, they (reluctantly) sat together at the awkwardly smushed together desks with Will across from them. But when he got to class shivering that day, Max wasn't there.

Mike had a book out, reading furiously and tapping his finger against his desk. Will recognized it as the one they were assigned two weeks ago. Max, Will, and Mike had planned to do their homework on it together. Unfortunately for Will, Mike had decided to go on a date with El that weekend. Which meant, of course, Lucas and Max joined to make it a double date. Will had spent his weekend miserably finishing the essay, trying to ignore Dustin's constant distractions as the two hung out.

Of course, Will wasn't going to bring that up. there wasn't any use in saying 'i told you so,' it'd only serve to get Mike in a bad mood.

When Will seated himself across from Mike, he looked up from his book with a smile so wide that will instantly felt bad for mentally reprimanding his irresponsibleness. He returned the smile, ignoring the twisting feeling in his stomach.

"I hate this book," Mike breathed out, relieved. Like Will was his savior, coming to recuse him from the evil book project he procrastinated doing so long.

"Wasn't that bad," Will muttered conversationally, bringing out his own book from his bag.

Mike nodded, but instead of returning to his book, he leaned forward towards Will.

Wills' breath caught when he glanced up. Mike was mere inches away, his eyebrows drawn in confusion as he studied Wills's face. What's he doing? What should I do? Is he joking around? Should I make a joke?

Wills' mind raced, sorting through tons of possibilities as to why Mike would be so close to him. His cheeks burned at some of them, and he gripped his book tighter into his chest.

"Your lips are blue," Mike observed with a frown, "are you okay?"

A simple question, but both the boys knew it held more weight than Mike would ever let on. Is it because of the upside-down? Can you feel the monsters? Did you have another vision? Should we call your mom?

"Yeah, just cold is all," Will answered, trying to remain as composed as possible. His chest sagged a little with relief when Mike backed away. Or was it relief? He couldn't tell.

Mike, however, still wasn't pleased. After only a moment of what looked like deep concentration, Mike shoved the knitted sweater off of his body in one smooth motion.

Wills' eyebrows raised and he was left not knowing how to react. He didn't want to make Mike uncomfortable, but what if Will was uncomfortable that Mike undressed so casually? Was he uncomfortable? Yes, he thought, why else would my stomach feel so fluttery?

Mike handed the sweater to Will nonchalantly, and Will had to take a second to collect himself. He willed his eyes to focus on the sweater, and not the slight tussling of his friend's hair or the way his button-up undershirt revealed his collarbones.

"Are you sure?" Will asked when words returned to him, holding the sweater like it was some kind of rare gem.

Mike shrugged and adjusted the cuffs on his sleeves, "yeah of course. I have more sweaters at home."

The soft cotton smelled like Mike's house as Will pulled the striped

shirt over his small frame. Fresh grass and vanilla, the thing he always smelled when walking into Mike's room or being close to him.

Mike was smiling again when Will finally had the sweater on, but his face was strained with repressed laughter.

"My hair?" Will asked, probably a little too nervously. The thought of Will looking like a mess in front of Mike always made him tense up. Sure, it was normal to want to look nice. But when he was around Mike, it felt more serious. Like his appearance needed to make Mike smile.

Mike's laugh finally escaped, and he smoothed Will's hair out for him while shaking from laughter. Will didn't wanna know what his hair had looked like.

"Well it certainly looks better than when I wear it," he laughed, using his other hand to blindly flatten his own hair

Mike's hand was lingering on Will's head when the teacher entered. His hand quickly shot back, his eyes wide in a way that said 'I don't know exactly why, but I know I shouldn't be caught doing this.' It reminded Will of when they were children and Mike would come inside from recess wearing sandbox-stained shorts.

As class began, and Mike returned to speed-reading his book, Will struggled not to focus on the sweater too much. It was just a shirt, right? Why did Will care so much? Friends gave each other sweaters all the time. But the smell of Mike and his basement that Will had spent so many nights in was too appealing not to smell.

The rest of the day went without talking to Mike. He had to stay in English class for lunch, so Will ate his school pizza next to Lucas and Dustin. He mainly sat quietly, listening to their bickering and intervening when it was getting too serious. To his surprise, neither one of them noticed the sweater. all he got was 'cool shirt,' from Dustin, who then became preoccupied with his pudding cups and didn't mention it more. Will thought that the clothing article was distinctly Mike's. the stripes in the middle were in almost every one of Mike's sweaters, and the sleeves hanging off of Will's wrists clearly showed that it didn't belong to Will.

Somehow, the knowledge that his friends weren't aware of Will sharing Mike's sweater made him sigh with relief. He didn't know why, it wasn't like it was a huge secret. Lots of people in class saw Mike give up the sweater, but to Will, it felt like a bad thing.

Mike didn't see it as a big deal either. The next day, when Will returned the sweater with a shaky hand, he just nodded thanks and slipped it into his bag. However, all of his classes that day were spent thinking about the sweater. Would Mike be upset that Will's mom washed it? All the Byers had was a clothesline, and the Wheelers owned fancy appliances that dried the clothes on their own. What if the sweater now smelled like grass and mildew? What if Mike was upset and had to throw out the sweater?

Mike didn't echo these concerns at all. A few days passed and he showed up wearing the sweater again. To Will, it felt like Mike was pretending it never happened. Then it hit him, of course, he was. It wasn't a big deal for friends to loan out clothing articles. Will would've let any of his friends borrow his jacket or overshirt in a heartbeat. So why was the feeling of Mike's soft sweater still glued in his mind?

On December 23rd, Mike wore the sweater again. This time he also had on a red and green bead necklace, and a headband with antlers attached.

All of his friends were in his living room, huddled around a game of dungeons and dragons that nobody was taking super seriously. El was nodding off on Mike's shoulder and Lucas kept going to the kitchen to taste test the food Will's mom was preparing.

Everyone was laughing, even El who didn't understand dungeons and dragons was having a blast when she wasn't napping. That's why when Will walked out of the bathroom he didn't even notice he was under mistletoe.

Mike did. Mike abruptly stopped on his way to the bathroom and pointed upwards. "Mistletoe. " He said nonchalantly, laughing. but the laugh cut off too short, Will could hear a hint of insecurity in Mike's voice.

Will just nodded dumbly, shoving his hands into his pockets awkwardly. He looked towards the floor, thinking about his mom hanging up the decoration. She probably meant it for her and Hopper whenever he visited, never intended for it to be something so anxiety-inducing. That's what he was thinking about when soft lips brushed his.

Just a second. The world didn't stop spinning, time didn't slow down. But for a second, Mike's lips were pressed against his own, bending down to reach Wills's face. Then a second later, his lips were gone.

When Mike had leaned back, Will stood shocked, staring at Mike's rosy cheeks. He knew he probably was burning scarlet all over. There was an awkward pause before Mike muttered "rules are rules." But his sense of humor was gone, replaced with an uneasy expression.

Mike didn't look at will again that night.

When it was morning, he awoke with a throbbing headache. Upon opening his eyes, he was able to figure out why pretty quickly.

His head was laying on the floor pressed to the wood floors. A blanket was on top of him tightly, meaning his mom had probably done it before going to bed. It took him a second to get his bearings and remember why he was on the floor, but when he did an intermingling of joy and stress overcame him.

Mike. The kiss.

Will had initially been resting his head on El's legs, having fallen asleep there with the rest of the party. As Will continued laying there, replaying the kiss over and over in his head, analyzing it all, the snores of Dustin almost lulled him to sleep again. But he wanted to find out where El was first.

Wherever Will was expecting to find her, it was very wrong. She was on the front porch with Mike, the soft lantern light illuminating both of their faces. Will hadn't even noticed Mike had gone, but then again Mike did set up his blanket bed pretty far away from his.

Selfishly, Will hopes that Mike can't sleep because of the kiss. So that

maybe he won't feel alone. Because deep down maybe Will thinks that he enjoyed the short kiss, and maybe Will wanted to replay it in his head. Surely Mike had to be feeling the same way right?

But his question is soon answered.

As Will watches Mike's gaze linger away from the stars and onto El, Will realizes his mistake.

There's such a powerful look of love in Mike's eyes as he focuses on his girlfriend, Will knows for sure that Mike won't think about his kiss ever again. He can see with how Mike smiles at El's awestruck expression and interlaces their fingers that Mike doesn't need to replay the kiss over and over. He has so many with El.

Of course, it was just a small, meaningless peck on the lips for a joke. Why else would Mike kiss him?

As the cold air bites at his feet and he hovers awkwardly in the doorway, El shivers and starts to rub her arms. The way she does it reminds Will of a cartoon character, and he remembers that the cartoon is probably where she learned the gesture in the first place.

Mike's smile is tender as he takes off his sweater. Will feels like he's suddenly back in October, the paranoia and fear that squeezes his heart during the anniversary of his traumatic experiences.

El slips on the sweater just like Will did. The same sweater Will was wearing twenty days ago.

Pale hands gently remove El's hair from underneath the neckline, and Mike beams a lovestruck smile. A smile not meant for Will. A smile that will never be meant for Will.

He feels a harsh stab of longing at the image. He wishes El were a bad person so his irritation would be justified, but he knows El could never be a bad person, unfortunately. Everything down from her honesty to her pretty eyes screams good.

And Will hates it.

He hates that she's so amazing. He hates that she's one of his favorite



people. Why can't he hate her as an excuse for disliking her and Mike's relationship? When Will goes back to his blanket bed, he realizes the answer is very obvious.

He liked Mike's kiss more than he should have.

Will finds himself staying up the remainder of the night. Mike and El return inside after a while, Mike whispering details about stars and galaxies for El. She's silent but Will figures she's interested because he feels her carefully remove her blanket from beside him to go sit and whisper with Mike.

When Will gets up a few hours later, he can just barely make out the outline of Mike's body, his hand locked with El's and an arm around her shoulder.

#### **Author's Note:**

hi ! like i said i just wrote this while procrastinating schoolwork so i don't think i'll actually make a story out of it, but i was thinking about writing more little oneshots based off of conan grays other songs. soo maybe that then. sorry it ended so lame \*yawn emoji\* also there were supposed to be some lines italicized but ao3s big dumb dumb and i didnt wanna manually italicize them. just use your imagination